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ABSTRACT

The aim of this newsletter, issued six times a year, is to help social studies teachers and supervisors define issues or questions concerning social studies program planning and suggest directions for dealing with issues. Suppositions for the teacher concerning their instructional programs are offered, followed by suggestions to consider in each instance. The supposition that the teacher decides to implement an alternative program requires that he or she be concerned with available resources, working within state requirements, basic social studies skills, other considerations such as time span, teacher and administrative commitment, and with community understanding. Other suppositions are that a teacher is asked to translate the social studies program into performance goals; that a district drops a fourth year social studies requirement; and that a teacher is asked to reorganize a social studies program when tracking is eliminated. Other items included in the newsletter are announcement of upcoming conferences, opportunities for teachers, and new social studies projects. The newsletter is free to those who place their name on the mailing list. (SJM)

BUREAU of SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Science Education

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Donald Bragaw, Chief

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Recent developments in Social Studies program planning have raised points of issue and questions for Social Studies teachers and supervisors. The aim of this newsletter is to help in defining some of those issues or questions, and to offer limited suggestions as to possible direction for dealing with the issue. As with other newsletters, we are hopeful that it will provide a basis for departmental or school discussion.

o What if you decide to go for alternative programs: adjusted syllabi, mini-midi-maxi-courses, etc.?
  . What resources do you have? Take an inventory of:
    - texts and supplementary materials
    - teacher specialties and desires
    - student needs and desires
    - student skills at any one point (diagnostically based on a skills continuum)
    - basic information possessed by students - an achievement inventory - diagnosis
    - schedule flexibility: What are the parameters?
    - what could be offered immediately (start modestly) and what could develop later (build)
    - materials that offer problem-solving and decision-making experiences and skill building? (e.g., simulations)
    - what new knowledge has emerged since last you took a course?
  . What steps can be taken to assure that students will accomplish at very least the minimal State requirements?
    - You might offer 40-50 social studies courses, but are there basic courses all should take? e.g., legal requirements of American History?
    - Is there assurance that students will become aware of a variety of cultures other than their own?
    - What choices can students make and still meet the requirements?
    - Is there a record of student performance level re skills, concepts, process elements - as well as content indicators?
    - While indepth studies are possible, is the real emphasis on the learning process - not on the teacher's favorite subject based on college notes?
    - Are there valid self- and school-checks on progress toward goals?
    - Are there clearly identified goals/objectives for:
      . programs as a whole?
      . students?
      . mini-courses?
      . use of materials?
  . Can you begin to gauge more accurately the real time elements needed to acquire basic tool skills? And, what kinds of followup are necessary? As opposed to the spoon-feeding of content?
    - What skills can best be introduced or reinforced in a mini-course on _____?
    - What concept(s) could be best deepened, broadened or introduced in a midi-course on _____?
    - What diagnostic step(s) should be taken to identify the above? What continuums established?
    - What affective and/or valuing components can be planned for inclusion?

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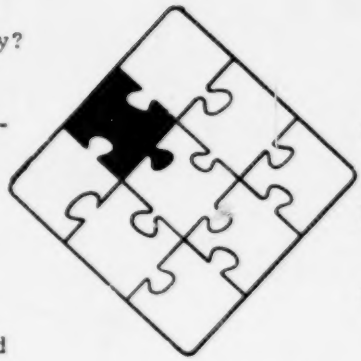
o What other considerations are necessary?

. Time spans: could mini/midi/maxi range from one week (voting procedures and registration), to midi-size - five/ten weeks (Mass Media in American Politics), to maxi-length - simultaneous offerings from syllabus topics?
  - in a modular schedule (12-22 periods varying in length)
  - in a "free week" or period, deliberately left unscheduled
  - beginning or end of school year
  - during lunch period (film discussion groups)
  - end or beginning of each day
  - during study halls (once established)

. Teacher commitment:
  - may mean more preparations - usually, however, of greater interest
  - to working with individual students to a greater degree
  - to recognize possibility of student contribution to creation, conduct, and leadership of class
  - to ongoing evaluation of courses and program; greater record-keeping

. Administration commitment:
  - give the system a fair trial
  - allow it to exist within "regular" schedule if it can be worked out - or modulated
  - to recognize through observation and evaluation the benefits of:
    student choice
    student involvement in curriculum development
    teacher professionalism
  - to give students greater responsibility to carry out assigned tasks in a variety of ways other than straight rows in a classroom
  - to promote guidance support for scheduling and counseling
  - to foster budgetary support for programs for which you can honestly predict some success

. Community understanding:
  - What steps can you take to assure community support?
    Can you clearly show, at least, comparability to present program?
    Can you show how the new program will clearly help their individual children to a greater degree?
    Can you involve community representation in planning?
    What information can you provide that will promote understanding?
    What responsive procedures are there to legitimate challenges?
  - or - What about Dwight Allen's admonition to "legitimize experimentation" and allow an alternate school to exist side-by-side with the regular program?



o What if you are asked to translate your social studies program into performance goals?

. Can you accurately describe now the specific objectives?
  skill, knowledge, concept, process — you aim for each — student? lesson? unit? year?

. Do you really know in September which objectives each particular student should be about in your class until June?

. Do you have a diagnostic instrument which could help you design course/es or year - your instruction and the student's learning? Have you thought of using the June Regents in September in such a manner?

. Have you identified teacher and administrator performance objectives to carry out the change?

. Do students assist in setting and achieving goals?
  - What is student level of awareness of need to set and achieve goals?
  - What experiences can students go through to help them develop skill of goals-setting for themselves?
  - Are student concerns and problems a part of the process?

. Can you put the burden for these on a computer somewhere?

. Are strategies and materials selected and used with objectives clearly in mind? Can the American Revolution (at whatever the level)

be used to have students go through some kind of conflict resolution exercise?

. Does your report to parents reflect the degree to which objectives are achieved? Skill achievement? Knowledge achievement? Process achievement? Concept achievement? Can this be in place of, or in addition to, the regular report system?

o What if your district drops a fourth year social studies requirement?

. Are electives the perogative only of the 12th grade?

. You can still offer electives and students can still take them - regardless of requirement.

. You can still alter the pattern of your program to adjust to the slack.

. You can look at your program more as a K-11 program which students can take at their speed - some even taking (3) years instead of 4, 9-12, and for some, a full social studies program in 2 years.

. You could pick up community action programs - or even alternate regular programs with semesters, or mini-courses of students involved in community projects (The Antioch approach).

. You could consider the idea that any one year has a priority over a particular subject, or content - Who said Afro-Asian studies was best assigned to the 9th grade?

. You could create a demand - sell your social studies program - improve options and teaching quality, involve students in curriculum development.

. You could develop a 4-year career opportunities program - providing mini-courses (social security, history of unionization, automation, leisure) alternating with a variety of work experiences, or

- political party participation
- local community studies
- advertisement analysis
- small business: self and government assistance
- "from blacksmith to auto-mechanic"
- the sociology of factory work
- business organizations: static or dynamic
- 1960's and 1970's: the new job markets
- futuring: changing my job
- simulations for decision-making skills
- field studies to "sore spots" in environment with sessions devoted to potential solutions

. You could begin to seriously consider cross-disciplinary programs in humanities, environmental and population studies, the social and political implications of the quadratic equation, etc. - with the appropriate co-operation of other areas.

. You could help establish the mechanism for interested students to take college courses.

o What if tracking is eliminated in your school and you are asked to reorganize the social studies program accordingly?

. Can you professionally accept the challenge to provide for course differentiation?

. Can you introduce your students to a variety of teaching strategies - observing carefully the impact on various segments?

. Can you see the need for developing different tools to assist all in accomplishing the same goal?

- Is there a visual or aural component to your lessons as well as verbal?
- Are there individualized packets (LAPS, or whatever) which are built around the same skill, concept, or basic knowledge which:
  1. are at varying reading levels?
  2. are wholly visual - and require a cassette to provide instructions?
  3. require two or three to work in concert - and

you group for peer respect and instruction?
4. are built around a sound-filmstrip and you? Arrange to meet student(s) for oral discussion?
5. require interviews or surveys on which obvious levels of ability can co-operate?

. Is it possible that "trouble" only comes when you insist that "your" course can only be taught one way?
- content is a vehicle - and it comes in different sizes, shapes, styles, and colors
- skills are tools which become familiar and usable with practice
- problem-solving skills can only be developed when problems are an integral part of the challenge - and not all students will try to solve them in the same way

. Is it time to consider a variety of courses - with varying appeal - in which interest is a key factor - but which still accomplishes the goals?

Announcements

Social Science Education Consortium at Boulder, Colorado has distributed an announcement concerning its Teacher Associate Program. Those selected (3 from across the nation) become affiliated with the SSEC staff between September 1 and June 30, 1973-74. Travel, conferences, work with curriculum projects, aiding in materials acquisition and retrieval system development are part of this interesting opportunity. Mike Radz from Webster was an associate, 1971-72. If interested, write for brochure and application to Teacher Associate Program, Social Science Education Consortium, Inc., 855 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80302. Deadline: March 1, 1973.

1973 American Educators in Japan Summer Programs. Over 100 teachers are selected to make an intensive study of Japan and its culture, live with a Japanese family, and be the guest of a local secondary school. Programs A (June 28-August 27, $1,625) and B (July 2-July 25, $875) have an application deadline of April 2, 1973. Sponsored by National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Council on International Education. Further information and application: NASSP, 1201 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Intercultural Social Studies Project (ICSSP) is a new project which is developing ideas and materials for secondary schools. Directed by James M. Oswald, formerly of Syracuse University, the project is jointly sponsored by the American Universities Field Staff (AUFS) and the Institute of International Studies of the USOE. A network of secondary social studies teachers will field test the pedagogical framework and intercultural studies materials. The project address is: ICSS, c/o AUFS, 3 Lebanon Street, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755, (603) 632-2110.

. Upcoming dates to begin to plan ahead for:

March 15-17: New York State Council for the Social Studies Meeting - "Getting It All Together" - Rochester, N.Y.

April 4-6: Northeastern Regional Social Studies Conference (sponsored by Massachusetts State Council and NCSS), Boston. Advance information obtainable from Dr. Patricia Glasheen, Dept. of Elementary Education, Rhode Island College, Providence, R.I. 02908.

April 4-6: Toward Humanizing Education Conference, Concord Hotel. Some openings still exist for district teams interested in humanizing schools. Check with Mr. William Clauss, Associate, Humanities Division, State Education Department, Albany, N.Y. 12224.

July 9-20: Curriculum Development for Open Education Workshop, SUC Plattsburgh. Check with Anthony R. Pacelli, Director, Office of Continuing Education, Room 313, Kehoe Administration Building, SUC, Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901.

. Look for the 10th grade World Cultures Sample Questions packet sometime during April or at the latest, beginning of May. This, hopefully, will meet the final examination needs of various areas. Please remember that the packet is not designed as a final examination.

. Dear Mr. Levison: Please forgive our extra "n" in your name in our last newsletter: the message is the same, but we apologize for the "de n t" in your identity.